. . . come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;
and I will make an everlasting covenant
with you . . . Isaiah 55:3

covenant

An A.R.E. Membership Course

VOL. 3, NO. 11

LESSON XXXV: Know Thyself

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. . .I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people . . .for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Jeremiah 31:31, 33, 34

Mankind, you and I, royal citizens of the universe, gods, children of the Most High, all of us—how is it that we have understood so little and thought so poorly of ourselves and others?

Now as a new age is dawning, we stand on the threshold of a new awareness. We can awaken from our sleep and walk in the growing light of a brighter day. There is some darkness ahead. Yet, it has been said that it is darkest just before dawn. Therefore, let us arise early in this time of transition of consciousness and open the shutters to the first rays of new light. Let us allow this light to illuminate the pages of the dark tomes of our past as well as the bright blueprints of our future.

Let us ask ourselves some of the universal questions of mankind: "Who am I?" is the great question of the East. In the West the same question takes the form given us by the Psalmist who pondered, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:4) All thinking persons ask, "What is truth?" "What is the ultimate nature of reality?" and "How can I know for sure?" And all are puzzled by the eternal riddle, "If a man die, shall he live again?" "Why is there pain and suffering?" "How can I better understand myself and others?" and "How can I change so as to become what I know I could be?"

The ancient philosopher said, "Know thyself." More recently we have been reminded that the proper study of mankind is man. Edgar Cayce said, "*. . .the greater study of self. . .*is and should be the great study for the human family. . ." (3744-4)

Why should we study ourselves? Elsewhere we are reminded that "the unexamined life is not worth living." We must come to know ourselves for, if we live out our days in an unexamined life, we may find we have devoted our time, our energies, our efforts to endeavors which in retrospect were far afield from what knew to be worthwhile and what we truly wished to accomplish. Not knowing ourselves, we live out our days driven by the world's pressures and pressures from those about us, from our immediate desires and from tensions of the physical body.

We undermine the most meaningful opportunities of our careers and our relationships because those forces operative within us seem not always to work toward our good. We do and say things for reasons that we do not understand. We pursue what is not at the top of our own list of priorities. We allow habits, addictions and compulsions to guide our activities rather than our own higher sense of what is right and most valuable for ourselves and others. We give others a power over us and allow ourselves to be ruled by other people's thoughts, creeds, expectations, fears and prejudices. We need to know ourselves both to *avoid* becoming what we don't need to be and to allow ourselves to *become* what we truly are.

Fortunately, we are promised in the words of the ancient prophet that the days are coming in which there will be fulfilled a new covenant, a new testament, a new promise from God: the opening up of the consciousness of all mankind to a knowledge of God and to a freedom from the limitations of the sin of ourselves. These days seem to be coming to fulfillment now. As we each set upon the path of knowing ourselves in the deepest and most meaningful sense, we may hasten that day for all mankind.

Where shall we begin? "In the beginning, God. . ." is the proper starting place for *any* consideration of *any* subject matter. "In the beginning, *God!*" Philosophically this is the affirmation of a first premise, but it is also

personally the establishment of a rock upon which to stand. And he who builds his house not upon sand but upon a *rock* is wise. The affirmation *God* constitutes an ultimately satisfactory first premise. It is a premise of *the oneness of all force* which, when fully appreciated, will throw light upon every other conceivable or imaginable consideration.

> *"Only through attunement to the Spirit within can we truly come to know ourselves."*

Thus, the first step in coming to know ourselves is to do the hard, solid, clear-thinking work of establishing and keeping straight some premises: "Know, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One."

There is abundant and solid objective evidence all about us that realities exist beyond our present state of consciousness. There is clear evidence that sources of information, energy and relationships with other beings lie outside the realm of our present awareness of physical manifestation. Therefore, if we accept it as such, the facts from this field of research give us a solid empirical basis upon which to develop such a premise. The implications of a greater reality should challenge us all at the deepest roots of our being to ask, "If there *is* another reality, might it not be far more important in some respects than the present awareness in which I am so heavily invested?"

Some people become anxious that self-study may be a withdrawal from what they like to call the "real world" or a lulling of themselves into complacency in the face of all the *real* dangers about us. Yet, consider this insight of Carl Jung's: The danger is not the *bomb* itself but what might be the result of it in the hands of a single madman. The unit in need of change and through which change can truly be made is the *individual*—not organizations, governments or religions, but the individual. Now the only individual for whom we have clear and eminent responsibility is ourself.

After getting a sense of a greater reality and affirming the oneness of all force, then we may take the second step and address what has been given as the ultimate agenda for all mankind: the *living of the great commandment.* We are to love God with all our hearts, minds and souls and our neighbor as ourselves. Edgar Cayce called this commandment the *ideal* for all mankind and *the answer to all mankind's problems.* Not idealistic, but an ideal. We must all come to some point of agreement, some standard of behavior and of relationship one to another.

A major hindrance and barrier to loving God and others is the poor understanding we have of ourselves, of our basic spiritual natures, and of the lawful influences which have led us to our present state with all its limitations and opportunities. We do not understand the forces, structures and processes involved in the functioning of ourselves and of our relationships with others; we lack an adequate perspective of our ultimate potential.

However, even if we try to follow this great commandment, we find in ourselves an unwillingness or inability to live by such a standard. Thus, the third step of coming to know ourselves is to deal with that part of ourselves which keeps us from becoming what we are and are meant to be.

How can we take these first three steps? We are assured that if we seek we shall find. We may consider this a universal law: when we seek, a force is activated, assuring us that we shall indeed find. So let us begin our search for God! Ours is a time in which there is an abundance of literature, workshops, leaders and instructors, and—especially important for many of us—access to the Edgar Cayce readings. If we pursue and make use of these opportunities to nourish ourselves with this kind of mental and spiritual food, we may begin to grow. We learn by comparison—not by asking who is right or wrong, but rather by dwelling upon uplifting thoughts to quicken a sense of our own beingness and of the potentials of expanded awareness to which we are all heirs.

If we affirm God, we mean not only that God is, but also that He is *all* that is, and *all that is* is God. With this all-inclusive awareness which should accompany the affirmation of God, we may see how the great commandment follows as a law. Affirming *God* affirms not only being but a *quality* of being which is love. God *is* love; therefore, the commandment follows that we are to love Him and His manifestations in creation.

It is simply a question of motivation. The affirmation of God requires us to consider two things: (1) that the motivating force of the universe is love and (2) whether our own motives are in line or out of accord with the flow of this force of love. If we take inventory of all the motivations of mankind and of ourselves and measure them by what the word *love* truly and most deeply means, we see that this *is* the spirit in which we want others and the universe to relate to *us*. Thus our own highest evaluation of proper motivation is love. As children of God, we see love as the nature of our being. Setting love as an ideal, we may begin to awaken that motivational potential within ourselves more and more frequently under many more conditions.

Many of us have acknowledged the primacy of the great commandment but we have not found it in ourselves to make it the motivation, incentive and criterion for our lives. Since God is love and He is in the process of bringing everyone and everything into accord with love, we may come to see this commandment not as an optional moralism but as an ultimate requirement. It is our destiny to be conformed to love. If we set it as our ideal, we may the sooner grow into full accord with that

destiny.

As we get a sense that our true origin and nature is of the Divine and that love is the ideal, we may address the question of why we are not in full command of that capability or in full attunement with that potential. What stands between us and our awareness of this ultimate nature?

We experience this separation in fears, inhibitions, innate dislikes, lack of talent or desired qualities of character. We encounter unexpected misunderstandings and disappointments in our relationships with others. We are afflicted with disorders or diseases which are irritating or even disabling. We find in ourselves inclinations and tendencies to certain weaknesses of body, mind and character. Why?

Beginning in our culture with the writings of Sigmund Freud, we have heard the expression, "the unconscious." Although all of us have such and may acknowledge that it exists in others, none of us experiences it as part of ourselves because by its very nature and definition, it *is* unconscious. We may disavow or ignore the unconscious part of ourselves for a time, but sooner or later it begins to have its effect in our lives, on our bodies and on our relationships with others.

Since a portion of ourselves is unconscious, we must begin precisely where we are, with the limitations, weaknesses, habits, inclinations—that which some would call karma—of our present status. From that point of here and now we must begin. *The Secret of the Golden Flower* says: "The secret of the magic of life consists in using action in order to attain non-action. We must not wish to leap over everything and penetrate directly. The maxim handed down to us is to take in hand the work on human nature."

What does it mean to use action in order to attain non-action? The Sanskrit word for action is *karma*. Karma means literally action. Thus we may paraphrase this teaching to say, "The secret of the magic of life consists in using karma in order to attain non-karma." Nothing is required of any soul but to do what it knows to do today. Then the next step may be given.

If indeed we have lived countless lives in previous incarnations, the extent of this unconscious within even our own personal experiences is vast beyond imagining. If we add to that the consideration that all subconscious minds are in contact one with another and reflect upon the collective nature of mankind's thought forms, we see further how vast a realm resides just on the other side of the doors of consciousness which remain relatively closed in all of us.

Freud's study of the unconscious, the development of psychoanalysis (which at first seemed to hold promise as a therapy for the mentally ill) and its widespread, almost all-pervasive influence in American psychiatry have tended to put a darker face on the whole of the nature of mankind. Even so—as Jung pointed out—Freud studied only the neurotic layer of the unconscious.

We as individuals each have our unconscious with which to deal. Some advocate "getting in touch with our feelings." But let us remember what Jung has pointed out: that the veneer of civilization is very thin compared to the depths of the unconscious.

There is an answer. It is perhaps nowhere more graphically depicted than in the story of the assigned labors of Hercules. He was to clean out the Augean stables. He discovered that the rate of accumulation far exceeded his ability to shovel. This would be the case for us, too, were we to begin to tackle cleaning out our own unconscious! However, a plan occurred to him. He diverted the course of a river so that it would flow through the stables. *There is a river* for us all in the living water of the spirit within by which we may be cleansed.

This call to the healing power of the Spirit within is not a simple call to a religious revival. Whereas the Freudians tried to analyze the unconscious and found it unmanageable, some of our responses to the present-day call to religion have the effect simply of sealing over the unconscious with another thin veneer. The roots of the problem of the human condition are far deeper than we imagine. What does it mean when a great Christian political victory has as a major outcome the preparation of an already over-nuclearized nation for a greater nuclear potential? There is a great deal of work yet to be done if it is indeed *in God we trust!* The river flowing through us must bring forth brotherly love, kindness, patience, consistency and persistency.

The growing awareness of the Edgar Cayce story and the greater accessibility of this extraordinary information open for many of us *a* way—not *the* way, but *a* way—to begin to understand ourselves with a depth and richness that has rarely before been possible. Through this source we are given an understanding of our relationship with all of mankind and with the Divine, which is vast beyond most of mankind's greatest dreams. These readings provide an exceptionally rich combination of depth of insight and practical helpfulness. When applied, they may work in a superlative manner for those for whom this information holds a special interest.

With every quickening promise from this source regarding our divine natures and our relationship with the Infinite, we are challenged to day-by-day application of what we already know through acts of kindness, patience, gentleness and helpfulness. Here is a teaching which embodies the world's religions in a universal spirit and yet challenges us in a dedication to follow our own inner guidance with respect to our personal relationship to God. And through this information we may learn of an exceptionally applicable approach to an attunement with God.

Although Edgar Cayce gave literally thousands

of principles or applications that can be useful in our daily lives, perhaps one of the most important insights given is the insistence that we must all turn within to meet God. Just as our eyes are sensitive to light, so our souls are sensitive to God. We may know the God of the universe only through our own soul, that portion of the Divine within the depths of our inner being.

In this information we have specific and detailed instructions for attuning the physical and mental to the spiritual. In the process of meditation we can put aside or move through that vast realm of the unconscious which has been so problematic for so many individuals in dealing with their personal lives. How is it that we can move through these barriers to the greater reality of being? Cayce referred to it as attuning the physical and mental to the spiritual truth of ourselves. Not only are we, every one of us, souls, spiritual beings, with a direct tie with the Divine, but also every one of us has within a perfect pattern for perfect functioning—physically, mentally and spiritually. Carl Jung's concept of the archetype of the unconscious includes the hypothesis that within us all is an archetype at the top of the hierarchy called the *archetype of the Self*. When energized, this pattern brings about a balance and an integration in the individual, enabling him or her to manifest the fullest potential. With this concept we may begin to appreciate the promise of the covenant of old wherein we were told, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33) This law in our inward parts, in Jungian terms, is the image of God in which we are made. It is the circuitry or the programming within our own bodies as temples of the living God through which we may make attunement with the Divine. As the Spirit energizes this pattern and is permitted to flow through us in application, we *become* that image of God in which we were created in the beginning and to which we are destined to be conformed.

Although the practice of meditation sounds like a technique, the working principle of this is the living Spirit flowing through us as we attune ourselves and apply that Spirit in acts of helpfulness to others. As has been promised, the Spirit when it comes will bring all things to our remembrance. (See John 14:26.) As we pursue the practice of meditation, there is awakened within us remembrances, recollections of past lives and past relationships, hidden talents and potentials for gifts of the Spirit which bring a new dimension, a new richness, a new awareness to our lives and to the lives of those with whom we come in contact. The Pandora's box of the unconscious becomes an unlimited storehouse of talent when the patterns within it are awakened by the Spirit for the right purpose and at the right times. Stumbling blocks become stepping-stones. Only through attunement to the Spirit within can we truly come to know ourselves.

These are times when there are many voices. Jesus warned that in the last days many would come in His name, saying, "I am the Christ." If they say He is in the desert or in the secret chambers, His special warning was, "Go not forth!" Although we are living in a time in which many are indeed saying that the Christ has come or that they have special knowledge of His coming, there is a psychological principle underlying this teaching. It is to warn against the temptation to turn to others as a source of information, guidance or healing *in preference to and in neglect of* the attunement with the Spirit within that we can and must make. Even He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. . ." (John 16:7) The instruction, "Go not forth," warns us not to look outside but to turn within to meet God. Others may aid, but our *trust* must be in the living God. Anyone can make of any other (whether it be the church, a charismatic movement, the Edgar Cayce readings or the Bible itself) a false prophet if he or she prefers the fixed, external structure to the living Spirit within.

Just as Jeremiah spoke of God's promise to put His law in our inward parts and write it in our hearts, so did the ancient lawgiver articulate the same principle, saying, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. . ." (Deuteronomy 30:11-15)

The new covenant—in which we are promised "they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord"—is preceded by the promise that, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . ." Therefore, it is clear that the way we are all to come to know God and the truth of our own selves is by quickening that law written in us, that archetype of the Self written on the minds of our souls, that image in which we are made: the pattern of the Christ.

Herbert Bruce Puryear

Covenant is a 36-lesson membership course published monthly by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc. It is a benefit extended to Associate, Sponsoring and Life members. Back issues can be obtained at $1.00 each. Copyright © 1982 by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc. Edgar Cayce readings © 1971 by the Edgar Cayce Foundation. All rights reserved.